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### We did it – Exit 4 Land Conserved!



Thanks to hundreds of generous Vermonters, we reached the one million dollar goal to purchase 22 acres adjacent to Exit 4 in Randolph! When this parcel is added to the 150 acres conserved by the Castanea Foundation, a total of 172 acres of land will be protected from development and put into agricultural use.

This didn't happen by accident, and from the beginning it has been a team effort. Many thanks to our partners, [Conservation Law Foundation](#), [Exit 4 Open Space](#), and [Preservation Trust Vermont](#) –

and, of course, our many grassroots contributors and major donors. We did it! [Read more.](#)

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### VNRC NEWS

#### Smart Growth Summit a Success



When it comes to smart growth, Vermont has made a lot of progress – but there's still work to do! In partnership with [AARP Vermont](#), VNRC hosted a Smart Growth Summit on June 16, 2017 at Champlain College in Burlington. The summit brought together more than 160 local officials, planners, policy makers, developers, and business people for a dynamic and interactive event aimed at raising and addressing challenges and opportunities related to community development in Vermont. In opening comments, Governor Phil Scott noted that Vermont is a leader in smart growth – which involves

focusing development, investment, business, and housing in our historic, compact town centers. VNRC's Kate McCarthy noted, "Focusing on our downtowns and villages helps keep our farm and forestland intact, connects and engages our communities, and improves choice and mobility within our transportation network."

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#### Court Rules in VNRC's Favor in Morrisville Hydroelectric Project Appeal



VNRC has a long history of involvement with hydroelectric projects to ensure power that generated by the use of our public trust waters meets basic environmental standards. This week, the Environmental Court granted [VNRC's motion](#) to dismiss key issues in Morrisville Water and Light's (MWL) appeal of the Clean Water Act permit for the Morrisville Hydroelectric Project (Project) issued by the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR). In its appeal, MWL alleged that ANR failed to properly balance the protection of Vermont's public trust waters with the economic impacts and other societal benefits of the Project. VNRC argued that in raising these issues, MWL was

attempting to undermine a bedrock principle of Vermont and federal law that any project must meet water quality standards and protect fisheries habitat. Adopting MWL's argument would have set a dangerous precedent that degradation of public trust waters could be justified based on the economic impacts of meeting basic water quality standards. The Court ruled in VNRC's favor recognizing that

VNRC's Mission

Through research, education, collaboration and advocacy, VNRC protects and enhances Vermont's natural environments, vibrant communities, productive working landscapes, rural character and unique sense of place, and prepares

economic and social factors are not "germane to determining whether a Project meets the Vermont Water Quality Standards".

the state for future challenges and opportunities.

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## VNRC and Northern Forest Center Receive Working Lands Grant



VNRC, in partnership with the [Northern Forest Center](#), received a \$40,000 grant from the [Working Lands Grant Program](#) for wood heat market development. The grant will increase the utilization of high-efficiency, automated wood pellet boilers in Vermont, with the Northern Forest Center taking the lead on creating a marketing plan and materials. Climate action is a priority for most Vermonters, and as the Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan recognizes, "Replacing fossil-fueled heating with advanced wood-heating systems will benefit local businesses, the forest product economy, and Vermont

forest landowners by keeping funds local rather than supporting overseas economies." Through the promotion of highly efficient wood heating systems, we can replace fossil fuel dependence and move Vermont towards a more sustainable carbon friendly energy future, and support local economies. [Read more about this work here.](#)

## Business, Low Income, & Environmental Groups Ask Gov. Scott for Strong Action on Climate Change



On June 2, 2017, 13 business, low income, faith, and environmental organizations denounced President Trump's decision to withdraw the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement and sent a letter to Governor Phil Scott urging swift action to stem the negative consequences of this shortsighted move. We are pleased Governor Scott committed Vermont to the U.S. Climate Alliance, but urge him to take specific action to address climate change. [Read more.](#)

## VNRC Staff Provide Important Training for Vermont Attorneys



Two VNRC staffers, Forest & Wildlife Program Director and General Counsel Jamey Fidel, and Policy & Water Program Director Jon Groveman, were featured presenters at a seminar for environmental lawyers this month. Fidel presented an update on [H. 233](#), a bill that passed the Vermont House this session that adds criteria to [Act 250](#) requiring an applicant to minimize the fragmentation of priority intact forest blocks and wildlife connectivity areas. Groveman presented an update on Vermont's efforts to implement Act 64, the Vermont Clean Water Act, as well as the status of water funding, regulations on farm pollution, stormwater, and wastewater. [Learn more about VNRC's work on forest fragmentation.](#)

## Welcome to Amber Collett!



We're excited to introduce our new Communications & Community Relations Director, Amber Collett. Amber joins VNRC with more than a decade of communications and nonprofit experience, and recently completed her Masters of Environmental Science at Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. "I'm thrilled to be part of the VNRC team, and look forward to working with our many partners and members to help protect and maintain the natural resources, working landscapes, and communities that make Vermont so special," said Amber. She is an avid cyclist, so don't be surprised if you see her zipping around Montpelier on a purple Surly Straggler. [Read more.](#)

## VERMONT NEWS

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### Burlington Electric Adds Plug-In Hybrids to EV Rebate Incentive Program

Burlington Electric Department announced earlier this month that plug-in hybrids have been added to their electric vehicle (EV) rebate incentive program. Through this program, members of the Burlington community are eligible for rebates up to \$600 on the purchase or lease of a new plug-in hybrid EV with an electric range of



20 or more miles and an MSRP of less than \$50,000. Johanna Miller, VNRC's Energy and Climate Action Program Director noted, "This is a great incentive for Burlingtonians to seize. Kudos for Burlington Electric for stepping up and making it easier for their customers to invest in electric vehicles." [Read more.](#)

## Bennington Banner: Vermont Needs Long-Term Climate Change Plan



The Bennington Banner recently highlighted Governor Phil Scott's decision to bring Vermont into the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of states committed to meeting the goals laid out by the Paris Climate Agreement. VNRC agrees that protecting our environment helps support a strong economy, and we encourage Governor Scott and all Vermont elected officials to take a strong stand to help us achieve 90 percent renewable energy use by 2050. [Read more.](#)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Early Screening: From the Ashes, June 25 – Burlington



Join film Producer Sidney Beaumont, national Sierra Club President Loren Blackford, and Institute for Sustainable Communities VP of U.S. Programs Steve Nicholas for a sneak peek of the documentary film *From the Ashes*. The screening and accompanying talk, co-hosted by VNRC, will take a compelling look at the lives and issues behind the "war on coal" to show what is at stake for our economy, health, and climate. [Read more and RSVP here.](#)

## NATIONAL NEWS

### NWF Releases Factsheet on White House Budget Proposal



In May, the White House released its full budget for the 2018 fiscal year. The budget proposes severe cuts to programs meant to restore America's public health, protect our wild places and natural resources, and to climate and renewable energy programming. VNRC believes this proposed budget to be harmful not only to the health and wellbeing of Americans, but to our country's economic and climate security as well. [Read it here.](#)

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